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ABSTRACT

The controversy regarding library science as a separate branch of science in Poland is reviewed. In People's Poland, work in the field of library science has adopted the features of collective research. This is due to the unprecedented increase in the number of libraries, book collections and readers as well as changes in the methods of examining social phenomena. The place of individually active specialists in the management of libraries has been taken by scientific institutions set up for this purpose. In addition to university departments, work in the field of library science is also conducted in scientific libraries of institutions of higher learning, the Polish Academy of Sciences, and in larger public libraries. The initiator of various types of research work related to current organizational problems of librarianship is the Polish Library Association. Librarianship requires systematic studies on its theoretical foundations, practical skill in conducting research and didactic activity, i.e., to disseminate and popularize among the younger generation everything that is progressive. The setting apart of library science from the group of other disciplines can take place only by means of intensive research in this undoubtedly difficult, but most fascinating field of social life. (MF)

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Committee on Library theory and researoh

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RESEARCH ON LIBRARY SCIENCE IN POLAND

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Research on Library Science in Poland

The controversy regarding library science as a separate branch of science has been going on for many years already among librarians. After a break of many years it was taken up again in Poland in the Sixties. There could be noticed two opposite opinions during discussions and in scientific librarian's publications. According to one opinion library science was an integral part of a broader discipline, namely the science of the book. Since it embraces a complex of technical and organizational problems, connected with the collection, scientific description and utilization of library material, it cannot be considered a separate university discipline[1]. According to the other opinion library science can be clearly distinguished as a separate branch from among other sciences, since it is related to library activity, its present-day and future social functions. It has already its own theoretical substructure, though it makes full use of the methodological achievements of other disciplines such as sociology, economy, statistics and philology[2].

This discussion, though in essence not solved, is quite symptomatic as regards the general feelings of librarian circles. The dynamic development of library science during the past 25 years has brought forth a bulky catalogue of

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1 Głombiowski Karol: Bibliotekoznawstwo jako dyscyplina uniwersytecka (Library Science as a University Discipline) Roczniki Biblioteczne Yearbook VI: 1962 parts 1-2

2 Władysław Piasecki: Zwięzły wstęp do bibliotekoznawstwa (Concise Introduction to Library Science). Cracow 1968.

problems, growing bulkier with each passing year, problems that require fundamental modifications, improvements and corrections.

At the head of this list is the necessity to define in the next few years the organizational forms, on the basis of which is to be introduced the Law on the Libraries of April 9, 1969, which so distinctly stressed the principle of a uniform network for the whole of Poland. In this new legal situation it is indispensable to adopt a decision regarding the policy of accumulating collections; the system of giving access to them and of supplying information. More and more urgent is the need to start work, aimed at a rationalization of compiling library material, at defining the necessary norms and indications regarding the planning of a development of library services in the future, the introduction of technical installations in libraries and the need to free skilled librarians from toilsome, conventional activity.

This, as well as many other problems, mentioned at various occasions, make up a uniform complex of problems, which can no longer be solved with the help of individual, not coordinated activity, undertaken by the various centres or even entire library networks. Social practice today has too complicated tasks in store for the librarians, tasks, connected with the social organization of the utilization of information through the intermediary of library collections, to make it possible to base oneself exclusively on individual practices, or intuition that is its outcome. But there is no doubt that organizational practice in librarianship has by far outdistanced work on the theoretical foundations of

library science and that this situation exerts today an unfavourable influence on the possibilities to give precise definitions of the present-day functions of a library, that would be useful also in future.

Because a library is above all a social institution and its organizational shape since the beginnings of the culture of writing has been determined by the degree of the cultural development of the given community, it is to be expected that the theoretical foundations of library science were to a considerable extent bound to be based on methodological principles in the field of historical and social sciences and above all sociology, pedagogy and economy. Projects, connected with the organizational shape of library science should be the outcome of generalizations, stemming from a confrontation of the actual state of technology in libraries with the existing and not imagined needs of society.

Only quite recently dominant problems, interesting library science were those related to classification of collections, catalogue descriptions, conservation or the so-called library technology. Our times add rather without ceremony the duty to define the social function of the library, its political significance, the place it occupies among other educational institutions, its share in didactic and educational work and in fields, connected with social therapy.

These problems are particularly close to Polish library science. Its leading representatives, such as: Adam Łysakowski, Józef Grycz, Jan Muszkowski, and Helena Radlińska considered above all the social function to be the theoretical foundation of library science and subordinated to it all matters connected with the technical and administrative

activity of the libraries.

The growing number of publications, the explosion of information and the public which is more and more demanding, since it is educated and is looking for source material, which makes it necessary for the libraries to embark on work connected with the economic aspect of the activity of libraries, with the modernization of the traditional organizational model of individual centres as well as entire networks, with the rationalization of conventional activity, the automation of the processes of preparing collections and giving the public access to them.

And even for the most technological problems in research work, undertaken within the framework of library science, the criterion will be the needs of the broad strata of the population or of more narrow social sections as well as a thorough knowledge about them.

The changes that are taking place in libraries under the influence of reforms and which are being introduced, due to the pressure of the cultural requirements of the population, in turn exert their influence on this public, supplying proof of the social usefulness of libraries, thus giving more authority to the profession of a librarian, strengthening the confidence in this institution, in which the reader receives efficient and professional service.

The broadening of the problems connected with library science is accompanied by changes in the organization of research centres. Before World War II work in the field of library science, conducted by outstanding specialists of this discipline, was as a rule the result of their individual activity. In People's Poland, due to the

unprecedented increase in the number of libraries, book collections and readers as well as changes in the methods of examining social phenomena, work in the field of library science, just as is the case in other disciplines, has adopted the features of collective research. The place of individually active specialists in the management of libraries, has been taken by scientific institutions, set up for this purpose. To these belong above all three departments of library science, set up one after the other: in 1945 at the University of Łódź, in 1951 at the Warsaw University and in 1956 at the University of Wrocław. This created natural conditions not only for the education of qualified specialists for various types of libraries, but also of scientific workers specializing in library science.

The Wrocław Department developed its work in the history of the book and libraries in Silesia, while the Warsaw Department concentrated its work on contemporary problems related to library science, with special emphasis laid on research regarding the way books were received by the public, though in the work of this Department, too, could be noticed a quite distinct inclination towards research on the past of the book. Both Departments devote most attention to didactic activity, to the training of highly qualified personnel, so very much needed by the various types of libraries. The situation is worse as regards the number of scientific workers, trained for work in library science. Up till 1968 these three Departments conferred 488 master's degrees, 27 doctor's degrees on scientific workers and five obtained their assistant professorships (docent).

The increase in the democratization of education, which

is taking place in People's Poland, brought in its wake a growth of the number of libraries and what follows of the need of qualified librarians. In this situation attempts were made to help these Departments by setting up inter-departmental and post-diploma study courses in library science. Thus the Inter-Departmental Study of Library Science was set up in 1967 and in 1968 the Post-diploma Study of Library Science at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, in 1969 the Inter-Departmental Study of Library Science at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and the University of Łódź.

The main task of these study courses is to teach students of various specialities (philology, history, etc) library science and supply scientific information to enable them to take up work in libraries[3].

Work in the field of library science is in addition to University Departments also conducted in scientific libraries of institutions of higher learning, the Polish Academy of Sciences and in larger public libraries. On behalf of the National Library, work in the field of bibliography is being conducted by the Bibliographical Institute, which also coordinates the bibliographic activity of other libraries in the country. The Institute of Old Prints at the National Library enlarged its research activity including the history of printing and the history of Polish books in the past. Finally, in 1955 the Book and Reader's Institute was set up which con-

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3 Jan Baumgart: Międzywydziałowe i podyplomowe studia bibliotekoznawstwa na uniwersytetach w Polsce Ludowej (Inter-departmental and Post-diploma Studies in Library Science at the Universities in People's Poland). Bibliotekarz (Librarian), 1970, R.37, No.1, s.1-4

centrates its work on contemporary problems, related to reading habits and on organizational matters, connected with the network of public libraries [4].

The initiator of various types of research work related to current organizational problems of librarianship is the Polish Library Association [5]. It has its own publishing house with a relatively broad profile of publications and also issues three periodicals: "Przegląd Biblioteczny" /Library Review/, "Bibliotekarż" /The Librarian/ and "Poradnik Bibliotekarza" /The Librarian's Guide/, with the help of which it tries to popularize among librarians Polish as well as international present-day professional problems. The Association organizes many conferences and seminars dealing with problems of interest, which can serve as a starting point for an exchange of opinions between the representatives of various types of libraries and which exert an influence on the direction in which the research work should proceed, that is being conducted by the various work groups and committees. The Association concentrates its attention on cooperation between libraries of various types. It was precisely to this problem that the 6th Congress of Polish Librarians, held in February 1968 was devoted.[6] Having a

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4 Jadwiga Kołodziejska: The Book and Reader's Institute of the National Library in Warsaw. Libri 1969 vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 102-106

5 Jadwiga Kołodziejska: The Polish Library Association 1917-1967. Libri 1967, vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 246-251

6 Jan Baumgart: Rola Stowarzyszenia Bibliotekarzy Polskich w rozwoju bibliotekarstwa polskiego /The Role of the Polish Library Association in the Development of Polish Librarianship/. In: VI Zjazd Bibliotekarzy Polskich /Sixth Congress of Polish Librarians/ 12-14 II, 1968. Warsaw 1969, pp. 22-28.

membership of librarians, representing all types of libraries /public, scientific, specialized, school, army, etc./ the Association is in a position to establish a favourable atmosphere for many scientific undertakings.

Following the initiative of the Association a National Conference of Librarians of Specialized and Record Libraries was held in 1958, and in 1960 a Seminar, devoted to the building of libraries, attended by architects and librarians, in 1959 - a scientific session, dealing with information service and that same year - a session, entitled "Warsaw Libraries and the Requirements of the Readers." The outcome of these initiatives was research work and the publication of books and quite a number of articles in specialized periodicals.

In such a way the proper conditions were created in our country to develop scientific work in the broader sphere of the science of the book as well as in the narrower field, more closely connected with libraries, or in other words with the library science. A thorough evaluation of the merits of the trends as well as the effects of research work was made for the first time in a paper by Professor Helena Więckowska, prepared for the 6th Congress of Polish Librarians in 1968 [7]. It revealed the undoubtedly

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7 Helena Więckowska: Organizacja, stan i kierunki badań bibliologicznych 1945-1967 /Organization, State and Trends of Bibliological Research, 1945-1967/, In: VI Zjazd Bibliotekarzy Polskich /Sixth Congress of Polish Librarians/. Warsaw 1969. pp. 45-77.

rich scientific achievements in the broad field of the science of the book, namely: bibliography, the history of the book and libraries and above all two fundamental works: an encyclopaedia of the science of the book and a biographical dictionary of workers specializing in research on the Polish book, manuscripts, on study of incunabula, the history of printing, book designs, the paper manufacture, reading habits, etc. On the background of such achievements, those connected with the organization of libraries or library science are rather modest. Not much research work was conducted in this field, but some of the books are pioneer works: E. Świderski: "Współpraca bibliotek w zakresie gromadzenia zbiorów" /Cooperation of Libraries in Gathering Collections/; J. Pasierski: "Specjalizacja bibliotek" /Specialization of Libraries/; M. Dembowska: "Dokumentacja i informacja naukowa" /Scientific Documentation and Information/. The author of the paper herself stated, that despite development in this field... "there still is a predominance of historical subjects in our literature"[8].

In a list of planned works, especially prepared in 1965 by the Bibliographical Institute of the National Library, only six out of a total of 229 announced subjects, dealt with the organization of a network of public and scientific libraries and only five were connected with the internal organization of libraries. Part of these works were of a general nature regarding the various networks of libraries, such as "Planowanie i działalność bibliotek politychnicznych /Planning and the Activity of Libraries of Polytechnical

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Ibid., p. 70.

Institutes/, "Zadania naukowe i dydaktyczne biblioteki w szkole wyższej" /Scientific and Didactic Tasks of the Library of Institutions of Higher Learning/, or "Próba ustalenia norm pracy w oddziałach udostępniania w bibliotekach uniwersyteckich" /An Attempt to Set Up Norms of Work in Departments Giving Access to University Libraries/. There was, however, a lack of elaborations dealing with the work of libraries of various types and their mutual organizational connections. Only two of the planned subjects were of a theoretical nature, namely: "Bibliotekoznawstwo jako dyscyplina naukowa" /Library Science as a Scientific Discipline/ and "Terminologia bibliotekarska" /The Librarian's Terminology/. The above-mentioned list contains three Library Science Departments and 53 of the largest scientific libraries as well as some public libraries throughout the country. Thus, this list embraces research work, conducted by the National Library and above all the Bibliographic Institute and the Book and Reader's Institute [9]. A detailed analysis of this list reveals substantial disproportions between the various groups regarding subject matter. The past arouses keenest interest. As many as 58 research works, describing the history of the book and libraries, have been undertaken and 24 - on magazines and periodicals, while 28 works deal with reading habits.

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9 Maria Dembowska: List of unpublished scientific works in the field of the science of books, planned and prepared in libraries and by library science departments. Warsaw 1966, National Library.

The list informs about planned works that were not in all cases carried out. Wanting to evaluate the actual state of affairs I made at the beginning of 1970 an analysis of doctors' theses and those qualifying for assistant-professorship, based on information obtained from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education [10]. This catalogue lists 90 works, belonging to the library science section, of which only some, about 15 works were printed. Among the completed works dominate topics related to research on the periodical press, mainly conducted in the philological, historical and more rarely library science departments. It deals with the Polish periodical press, featuring political life, mentioning J. Łojek's "Studia nad prasą i opinią publiczną w Królestwie Polskim 1815-1830" /Studies of the Press and Public Opinion in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815-1830/ and related to the more recent times: "Czasopiśmiennictwo polskie w Rosji Radzieckiej w okresie od 1917 do 1920 r." /The Polish Periodical Press in Soviet Russia between 1917-1920/ by A.Slisz or works concentrating on one specially selected field of social life, like M. Zygadlewicz's "Polska prasa pedagogiczna w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim w drugiej połowie XIX w." /The Polish Pedagogical Press in the Grand Duchy of Poznań in the Second Half of the 19th Century/ or W. Bobrowska's "Czasopisma polskie dla dzieci i młodzieży w Królestwie Kongresowym w pierwszej połowie XIX w." /Polish Periodicals for Children and Young People in the Congress Kingdom, in the First Half of the 19th Century/.

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10 Catalogue of Doctors' theses and those qualifying for assistant-professorship. Warsaw. Yearbooks 1961-1968.

The second largest group, as regards subject-matter, are works dealing with reading habits. The dynamic development of reading, as noticed in the past 25 years, aroused the attention of the representatives of many scientific disciplines, such as sociology, psychology or pedagogy. Librarians approach reading habits as a criterion of the effectiveness of the activity of libraries and from there stems the keen interest in reading as an expression of the cultural transformations taking place in society. In contradistinction to the interest shown in press publications, concentrating on the past and rather on the more remote past, research on book reading habits concentrates quite distinctly on our times. Of the 19 works mentioned in this group only one deals with interest in reading,displayed by the representatives of Cracow medicine in the second half of the 16th century, on the basis of catalogues of their book collections. The remaining works are clearly divided up into two groups. To the first group belongs research on the quantity aspect of reading and its connections with more general processes of cultural transformations, taking place in various social strata of the population. Thus one can find works dealing with such topics as T. Parnowski's "Czytelnictwo w procesie demokratyzacji kultury" /Reading During the Process of the Democratization of Culture/, K.M. Czarnecki's "Książka jako czynnik oddziaływania wychowawczego na postępowanie młodzieży szkolnej" /The Book as a Factor Exerting Educational Influence on School Youth/, "Przygotowanie czytelnicze absolwentów szkoły podstawowej /Reading Habits Developed with Graduates of Primary Schools/ by M.Walentynowicz and "Czytelnictwo na tle życia kulturalnego i struktury społecznej mieszkańców

małych miast" /Reading Habits on the Background of the Cultural Life and Social Structure of the Inhabitants of Small Towns/. The second group contains works aimed at establishing the popularity of certain groups of books, such as belles lettres or popular science or preferences for certain authors or even certain individual books. To these belongs the work by S. Siekierski, entitled "Recepcja literatury pięknej na wsi" /Reception of Belles-Lettres in the Countryside/, "Recepcja Hansa Christiana Andersena w Polsce w latach 1855-1960 w świetle wydawnictw jego dzieł /The Reception of Hans Christian Andersen in Poland in the Years 1855-1960 on the Basis of Publications of His Works/ by Z. Brzozowska, "Recepcja twórczości G.B. Shaw w Polsce" /The Reception of the Works of G.B. Shaw in Poland/ by S. Kumor and S. Eile's "Twórczość Żeromskiego w ocenach współczesnych, 1892-1926" /Żeromski's Writings in the Eyes of His Contemporaries, 1892-1926/ as well as others.

Of the 13 works, connected with the history of the book and libraries only three deal with the latest times and also throw a light on the development of public libraries. All three of them were printed. J. Kołodziejska's work entitled "Publiczne biblioteki samorządowe w okresie międzywojennym" /Public Self-Government Libraries During the Inter-war Period/ is the summing up of the activity of librarians on the basis of the library legislation during that period and contains an outline of the first attempts to organize a network of libraries embracing the whole country. The two remaining publications: S.Badoń's "Publiczne biblioteki powszechne w województwie szczecińskim w latach 1945-1964" /Public Libraries in Szczecin Voivodship in the years 1945-

I964/ and R.Zawadzki's "Rozwój i działalność publicznych bibliotek powszechnych na Dolny Śląsku w latach I945-I964" /The Development and Activity of Public Libraries in Lower Silesia in the Years I945-I964/ are an attempt to present the characteristic features marking the development of the network of public libraries in the various regions.

Not many works deal with organizational problems of librarianship. Only six doctor's dissertations and works to qualify the author as assistant professor are connected with topical problems, such as information and documentation, cooperation between libraries of various types as regards the amassing of collections, specialization of scientific libraries or specialized libraries serving scientific workers. Worth mentioning among this type of works is a publication that appeared in 1970, written by M.S. Wielopolska, entitled: "Rozwój i organizacja bibliotek technicznych szkół akademickich w Polsce" /The Development and Organization of Libraries Attached to Technical Schools of University Level in Poland/, dealing with an important section, that, of scientific libraries.

It is obvious that doctors dissertations and those written to qualify for assistant professorship can only partly illustrate the trends of interests in the field of library science. Irrespective of these a number of publications have made their appearance during the past five years, publications that are the outcome of research work, undertaken by scientific centres, large libraries or by individual scientists. Worth mentioning among these is J. Korpała's work, entitled "Dzieje bibliografii w Polsce" /The History of Bibliography in Poland/. A first attempt to sum up research on reading habits is the book by M. Walentynowicz, entitled "Podstawy czytelnictwa powszechnego" /The Founda-

tions of General Reading Habits/. Undoubtedly a positive achievement is the collective work, resembling a text-book, edited by F. Popławski, entitled "Biblioteki szkolne w Polsce Ludowej 1944-1954" /School Libraries in People's Poland in the Years 1944-1954/.

However, one of the shortcomings of this work is the fact, that many problems, important for librarianship were not taken up at all. This regards above all research in the field of the organization of contemporary librarianship, on which depends the modernization of all the centres, their adaptation to the current and future needs of the readers.

Quite important, side by side with the already mentioned reasons, are the changes that have taken place in the organization of research work. In order to be able to cope with the methodological requirements, present-day scientific work in the field of library science must base itself on a workshop with up-to-date equipment, which means that it must be supplied with a proper collection of Polish and foreign bibliographic literature, technical equipment /computers, xerographs/, transportation means to move around the country, teams of scientific workers and auxiliary personnel, an efficient administration, the proper financial means to conduct experiments. An obsolute necessity are foreign contacts, too, possibilities to do post-graduate work, have consultations, participate in research work of an international nature, etc.

Work in the field of library science cannot be approached as something on the fringes of other work, having nothing in common with it, because a librarian who wants to devote himself completely to library science is bound to be fully

absorbed by it and to concentrate exclusively on the problems related to it. This principle should be binding first of all for the heads of Departments and library science pentres. Unfortunately it is still true that various individuals seek for asylum in libraries, who were a failure in other fields and who think that it is enough to like books to become a librarian. Librarianship is not some kind of mysterious knowledge, but requires systematic studies on its theoretical foundations, practical skill in conducting research and didactic activity, i.e. to disseminate and popularize among the young generation everything that is progressive. Scientific cooperation between institutes, conducting specialized research in various fields, belonging to the science of the book with library science Departments in Universities should be conducive to development of these mutually complementary features. This would permit the rational utilization of the still small group of highly qualified experts in library science and create real perspectives for the education of scientific workers for this field of science. One should not close one's eyes on the fact that the future students of library science will feel much more at home than the present-day teachers in the fields of automation, electronics, statistics, mathematics, the elements of the scientific organization of work and management. Publications in these fields, which have poured like a large stream into the libraries in industrialized countries and which in a couple of years will start to be used in our libraries, should immediately become part of the research programmes of centres and departments, concentrating on library science and should find the place they deserve in the educational system of

librarians.

The setting apart of library science from the group of other disciplines can take place only by means of intensive research in this undoubtedly difficult, but most fascinating field of social life.

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